

**National Electronic Disease Surveillance
System (NEDSS)**
Request for Information (RFI)



Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

Technology Services Division

February 1, 2009



Table of Contents

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION.....	3
1.1 BACKGROUND	3
1.2 PURPOSE	
1.3 SCOPE OF SERVICES.....	5
1.4 RFI OBJECTIVES	5
1.5 LIABILITY	6
2.0 MONTANA NEDSS BUSINESS NEEDS.....	7
3.0 POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS	8
4.0 RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS.....	9
5.0 CLOSING.....	12

List of Tables

TABLE 4.1 SCHEDULE.....	9
-------------------------	---



1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NEDSS) supports routine surveillance activities associated with the rapid reporting of disease trends to control outbreaks. The NEDSS platform allows states to enter, update and electronically transmit demographic and notifiable disease data to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The NEDSS Base System (NBS) is a specific implementation of the NEDSS standards that DPHHS has chosen to use. A patient-centric system, the NBS facilitates public health surveillance through the transfer and processing of appropriate public health, laboratory, and clinical data efficiently and securely over the Internet. The NBS imports electronic sources of information to initiate integrated online public health investigations and notify appropriate partners of important events electronically. As of June 15, 2007, the NBS is deployed in sixteen states, including AL, AR, ID, MD, ME, MT, NE, NM, NV, RI, SC, TN, TX, VA, VT, and WY. In addition to the state-hosted application model, the NBS is also available through a commercial Application Service Provider (APS).

Montana's Public Health and Safety Division (PHSD) is using the commercial ASP to host the NBS. This commercial ASP has to date been free of charge to use. However, since the trial period for the NBS is completed, states who utilize the commercial ASP will be charged at an annual fee.

It is anticipated the NBS and related MS SQL database could be hosted on an existing UNIX Oracle server within the DPHHS. Additional software of SAS, Sun Directory Server and JBoss would be required, but these are available at no additional cost to the State of Montana.

1.2 PURPOSE

This Request for Information (RFI) is issued by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services' (DPHHS) Public Health and Safety Division (PHSD) and is intended to solicit information, comments, suggestions, recommendations and creative ideas on the feasibility of replacing and optionally hosting a NEDSS compliant and user customizable system that is a state-specific solution for Montana.

Montana is seeking industry experts to submit RFI proposals that will assist the State in choosing the most cost effective and "complete" NEDSS solution. Because the State lacks the funds to develop a new solution using in-house resources, the State is limiting its research to replace the current system to vendor developed Commercial Off the Shelf (COTS) NEDSS solutions. The



ideal solution must provide core functionality such as that offered by the CDC's NEDSS Base System, and be scalable as a platform upon which additional modules can be added to meet expanding program area surveillance and reporting needs as the State builds up its Public Health Information Network (PHIN) to meet PHIN version 2.0 certification.

Lastly, the State must evaluate the cost/benefit of enhancing vs. replacing its existing NEDSS solution. Vendors must note that the State seeks a successful NEDSS solution within a modest budget. In order to satisfy this need the State seeks to gather information from a variety of Vendors to aid it in evaluating approaches to allow the DPHHS to efficiently procure an internet-based application for public health surveillance and data exchange. This application must adhere to PHIN standards, http://www.cdc.gov/phinf/library/documents/pdf/111759_NEDSS.pdf as per the CDC.

The State is considering the merits of the following solutions:

- Retaining and enhancing in a timely manner, and as needed, the existing NEDSS solution to meet PHIN certification in a hosted environment with development and support provided by the current vendor, or
- Retaining and enhancing in a timely manner, and as needed, the existing NEDSS solution to meet PHIN certification but hosted by the State of Montana, Department of Public Health and Human Services, Technology Services Division (TSD) with development and support provided by the current vendor, or
- Replacing the existing NEDSS with a PHIN certifiable COTS solution in a hosted environment with development and support provided by a new COTS vendor, or
- Replacing the existing NEDSS with a PHIN certifiable COTS solution hosted by TSD with development and support provided by a new COTS vendor.

Concise, conceptual responses are sought which will inform DPHHS decision makers of the options available and provide estimates of cost and implementation timeframes. Vendors may submit a response that includes one or more proposed solutions; however, responses should separately address all applicable information sought in Section 1.1 of this RFI as it pertains to each solution.



1.3 SCOPE OF SERVICES

The focal point of this RFI is the need for Montana to evaluate the feasibility and cost/benefit of retaining vs. replacing its existing NEDSS solution. Montana conducts routine public health surveillance including individual case entry, edits, case deduplication, and data analysis for statistical and reporting requirements as well as data export to CDC. Therefore, the State must have the capacity to securely receive case information from health care providers and electronic lab reports (ELR) from laboratories in accordance with all State and federal privacy and security requirements. DPHHS also requires a NEDSS that can be deployed to outside users throughout the state in order to discharge its responsibility to manage its public health surveillance data efficiently and effectively.

The State's primary objectives for a NEDSS enhancement or replacement include:

- Case management to include case entry, edit, and correct assignment, based on earliest date available (onset, diagnosis, lab report, referral, etc) of MMWR week to report data to CDC.
- Data export and analysis including NETSS export complete, accurate and configurable to administrative users and extended format data included in NETSS export.
- Demonstrated configurable functionality for system administrator to securely and efficiently manage local health department/jurisdictions and user roles within jurisdictions.
- Supplemental forms that are mapped to cases and data are exportable for data local analysis and for NETSS export to CDC, including the capacity to query forms and build custom forms.
- Conduct web-based data collection and data exchange over SSL or equivalent encryption methodology.
- Messaging software tools (i.e., ebXML, HL7, PHINMS) to support messaging and electronic data interchange between states, laboratories and other entities; provide an adaptive mapping capacity for ELR messaging from clinical laboratories to the NEDSS solution.
- Meets CDC's PHIN certification requirement 2.0

1.4 RFI OBJECTIVES

The objective of this RFI is to evaluate vendor supplied information and conduct a comparative analysis of the possible solutions. This information generated from this RFI will aid the State in determining, what is the optimal approach to hosting, maintaining and enhancing the NEDSS system. General objectives of this RFI are:

- Identify possible vendor hosting options for NEDSS; all servers and installation and support to be maintained and performed off site with perpetual licensing.
- Identify possible vendor options for hosting of NEDSS within the MONTANA.
- Identify possible vendor options to provide development and enhancement support for a NEDSS solution hosted within the MONTANA.
- Collect information to better understand available opportunities for a phased approach to provide MONTANA with additional program area modules for sexually transmitted disease



(STD), tuberculosis (TB), Lead, and others as required to achieve and maintain PHIN 2.0 certification.

1.5 LIABILITY

This RFI has been issued to obtain information only and is not intended to result in a contract or vendor agreement with any respondent. The State is seeking vendor community insight and information prior to finalizing business, functional, operational, and technical requirements for a Request for Proposal (RFP). There is no definitive plan to purchase any business services, equipment and/or software at this time as a result of responses to this RFI.

This solicitation for information does not commit the State to publish an RFP or award a contract. The State shall not be held liable for any costs incurred by the Vendor in the preparation of its response. The issuance of an RFP as a result of information gathered from these responses is solely at the discretion of the State. Should an RFP be issued, it will be open to qualified vendors, whether or not those vendors chose to submit a response to this RFI. This RFI is not a pre-qualification process.



2.0 MONTANA NEDSS BUSINESS NEEDS

DPHHS Public Health and Safety Division, Communicable Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) Bureau maintain the responsibility to collect, analyze and report communicable diseases for the State of Montana. CDCP conducts daily case entry, edits, searches, data analysis and data reporting.

NEDSS promotes the use of data and information standards to advance the development of efficient, integrated, and interoperable surveillance systems at federal, state and local levels. It is a major component of the [Public Health Information Network \(PHIN\)](#).

A NEDSS compliant system is designed to:

- Detect outbreaks rapidly and to monitor the health of the nation
- Facilitate the electronic transfer of appropriate information from clinical information systems in the health care system to public health departments
- Reduce provider burden in the provision of information
- Enhance both the timeliness and quality of information provided



3.0 POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

The State can foresee two possible alternatives for providing NEDSS solutions. Other options will be considered.

- Retaining and enhancing the existing NEDSS to effectively manage its surveillance system, or
- Replace NEDSS with a new COTS system.

All proposed solutions should address the CDC requirements in Attachment A: PHIN Requirements



4.0 RESPONSE INSTRUCTION

Table 4.1 Schedule of Events

EVENT	DATE
RFI Issued	February 1, 2009
Vendor responses due	March 13th, 2:30 PM 2009
Conduct Presentations	April 6, 2009

- This RFI will be posted at <http://gsd.mt.gov/osbs/Results.asp?AgencyID=PHHS2>
- Vendors are requested to submit their response by March 13, 2008, 2:30 PM. Please provide an original and four copies of your response to:

Bonnie M. Barnard, MPH, CIC
Surveillance Epidemiologist / Section Supervisor Montana Communicable Disease
Epidemiology Program | 406.444.0274

- For inquiries regarding this RFI, please contact

Bonnie M. Barnard, MPH, CIC
Surveillance Epidemiologist / Section Supervisor Montana Communicable Disease
Epidemiology Program | 406.444.0274

- Based on interest that is generated following the review of responses to this RFI, some vendors may be invited to present an overview of their company and services to representatives of the State. There is no guarantee that a vendor may be asked to provide a presentation. All presentation costs incurred by the vendor shall be born by the vendor.

The State is seeking a better understanding in the areas listed below. Please respond concisely and completely too each of the following bullet points. Base responses on current capabilities not planned.

- Provide a main contact name, address, e-mail address, and telephone number in each response.
- Briefly describe the vendor's organization, client base, financial stability and history. Please keep generalized marketing material to a minimum.
- The State is interested in a comparative analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the two most probable scenarios, which have been identified in section three. Please state your analysis/recommendations for one or both of the proposed scenarios.



- Every project has certain inherent risks. Describe the significant risk factors associated with your solution and how you would mitigate them.
- Describe your experience/expertise specific to state surveillance system projects.
- Describe your experience with adherence to surveillance standards, and in particular meeting the CDC PHIN requirements.
- Describe your relevant experience with installation, configuration and support of public health surveillance system projects.
- Illustrate current experience your company has with hosting a NEDSS solution.
- Please describe how your proposed solution would support user maintenance of the application's data that changes frequently (maintenance tables). Of particular interest is how a NEDSS can adaptively map lab results without vendor assistance since laboratory results and methods change over time. The process should be user friendly.
- Please provide a description of the ongoing cost for maintaining your solution post deployment. Give specific information as to the numbers and types of resources (State and Vendor) required to maintain the solution.
- Provide an overview of the technology and service offerings that you currently provide. Provide a breakdown of the number of customers served currently by your various product offerings.
- Describe savings you have achieved with other states as a result of your services/product as well as successful business consortium practices.
- Describe the platform that your system operates on (database, code base, etc.). If any of platform components are third party or proprietary, please note.
- Include details of the proposed software solution including database management system, licensed software suggested for data retrieval and reporting, proposed approach to developing any and all custom-built software components.
- Describe any technology that you have used to address the challenges inherent in meeting the demands of an environment consisting of constant regulatory changes, with expanding requirements for data sharing. The State's specific interests include: Web functionality; new technologies/architectures developed and implemented for Public Health data sharing or other related programs that resulted in program savings, greater staff efficiency, error reduction, and similar benefits; development strategies and



technology that achieve a rapid turn-around time for incorporating regulatory changes, and PHIN 2.0 certification.

- The State considers this to be a complex project that may span an extended period of time and requires both capability and commitment from a vendor. The State is interested in gaining a better understanding of your approaches to managing a similar project. Because the State is familiar with standard system development methodologies, the preferred emphasis is on an explanation of the rationale for timeline decisions and insight into your strategies and concerns for managing the timeline.
- Please provide suggestions and considerations for the State to evaluate as we develop the cost model and associated evaluation criteria. Describe your pricing/reimbursement methodology. Include costs for implementation, hardware or data lines, upfront licensing, ongoing licensing, and maintenance and support. Include a copy of your “boiler plate” customer contractual agreement.
- Provide estimated costs, implementation time frames, and resources necessary for the solution that you propose to be most advantageous.
- If the cost estimates that you provided needed to be reduced by 5%, 10%, or 15%, identify areas within your submission that you would recommend be trimmed or eliminated to meet the new total project cost.
- Please feel free to include any additional comments or suggested alternatives, as deemed appropriate based on your industry knowledge and expertise, which you feel would be beneficial to the State.



5.0 CLOSING

The Department of Public Health and Human Services thanks you for your efforts in preparing a response. Although this Request for Information does not require the State to issue a Request for Proposal or to award a contract, it is anticipated that the information gathered in this project will be highly beneficial and will inform the State's decision-making process.